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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 21 June to 15 December 2014 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my report dated 9 July 2014 (S/2014/461), the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2168 (2014).

2. As at 15 December 2014, the strength of the military component stood at 860 for all ranks and the strength of the police component stood at 66 (see annex).

II. Good offices mission

3. On 22 August 2014, I appointed Espen Barth Eide of Norway as my new Special Adviser on Cyprus. Since his appointment, Mr. Eide has been conducting regular visits to Cyprus to carry out the good offices mandate of the United Nations. I intend to issue a separate report on the state of play in the negotiations in the coming months.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

4. UNFICYP is intended first and foremost to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. Its mandate requires reconciling security considerations and the maintenance of the military status quo with allowing Cypriots who live and work in the buffer zone to pursue civilian activities and enjoy full and productive lives. Such an approach, when successful, builds confidence between communities and contributes to the overall effort by the United Nations in support of the peace process.

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A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

5. Since taking up her assignment in August, the new Force Commander has established good relations with the opposing forces, encouraging regular and transparent dialogue. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to maintain the integrity and stability of the buffer zone. Notwithstanding minor military violations committed by both forces, which resulted in occasional altercations with UNFICYP, relations between the latter and the opposing forces remained good. Thanks to regular patrolling and the mission's observation, reporting and liaison infrastructure, UNFICYP managed to avert attempts by both forces to effect low-level changes to the military status quo across the buffer zone. The non-recognition by the opposing forces, however, of the aide-memoire of 1989 and incidents that challenge the authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone continue to be of concern. On a number of occasions, the opposing forces continued to question the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire lines and, consequently, the extent of the buffer zone in certain areas.

6. During the previous reporting period, the Turkish forces had deployed 28 closed-circuit television cameras along the ceasefire line in central Nicosia without an attendant reduction in personnel, thus conferring a military advantage. Following consultations with UNFICYP, the Turkish forces removed approximately 30 soldiers from eight of those positions during the reporting period, negating the military advantage in those particular areas along the Green Line. The 20 remaining cameras without a corresponding reduction, however, continue to constitute a breach of the status quo.

7. For the seventh year running, neither of the opposing forces conducted their annual military exercises, with both Nikiforos in the south and Toros in the north being cancelled. In old town Nicosia, where the ceasefire lines are in close proximity to each other, instances of ill discipline at the lowest tactical level continued to pose occasional challenges. Furthermore, previously reported military positions established by both forces inside the buffer zone that violate the status quo remain in place, as is the case in Strovilia, where the Turkish forces have prevented UNFICYP from performing routine patrols since June 2014. Discussions to resolve this issue are ongoing. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

B. Demining activity

8. During the reporting period, demining was the subject of discussion between the two sides as part of the broader negotiations. Despite this engagement, the two sides continued to prevent access for demining to the four known mined areas in the buffer zone, of which three are under the control of the National Guard and one under that of the Turkish forces. The provision of information regarding 28 minefields, including 1,006 anti-personnel mines laid by the National Guard in the north between Nicosia and the Kyrenia mountain range before and during 1974, is also pending, despite both the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, and my Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Lisa M. Buttenheim, having raised the importance of providing detailed information of minefields for humanitarian reasons. Efforts are ongoing at all levels to

encourage both sides to advance demining inside and outside the buffer zone, including through the exchange of information on the whereabouts of minefields.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

9. As part of mandated tasks to contribute to the maintenance of law and order, UNFICYP police assisted and facilitated investigations conducted by the police services of both sides into criminal matters occurring within the buffer zone. This was the case in particular in the mixed village of Pyla, where UNFICYP is responsible for the conduct of law enforcement by the two sides. Cooperation between UNFICYP police and the local authorities is improving and efforts to address increasing criminal activities in the village are ongoing.

10. In parallel to this liaison on the ground, UNFICYP police facilitated meetings of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, and the Joint Communications Room continued to work actively, providing the police services of both sides with a forum for enhanced cooperation. The appointment for the first time of serving police officers as Greek Cypriot representatives to the Technical Committee signalled a significant step forward in cooperation. Over and above the exchange of information on criminal matters that have intercommunal elements, the Joint Communications Room focused on the investigation of crimes that took place within and across the buffer zone, the handover of persons of interest through the UNFICYP police and humanitarian cases.

11. At times, UNFICYP personnel faced challenges to their authority in the buffer zone and aggressive behaviour from individuals carrying out unauthorized activities, including Greek Cypriot armed hunters. UNFICYP urged the Greek Cypriot authorities to take prompt action in such instances, including through judicial proceedings. The conclusion of one such case is pending. UNFICYP also urged the lifting of restrictions on UNFICYP staff members seeking to undertake their duties in the north.

12. In line with its mandate to contribute to a return to normal conditions, UNFICYP continued to urge the authorities, local community leaders and civilians to provide relevant information on civilian projects in the buffer zone in accordance with established procedures. Regrettably, the university in Pyla, the construction of which remains unauthorized, continues to operate with next to no Turkish Cypriot involvement. UNFICYP continued to manage farming and other civilian activities in the buffer zone, issuing more than 700 permits for civilian activities and approving 20 of 22 civilian construction projects. In support of these civilian activities, UNFICYP facilitated the maintenance of essential infrastructure for public utilities and services to both communities, including through regularizing payment for all services.

13. Beyond the buffer zone, UNFICYP continued to provide humanitarian support to 345 Greek Cypriots and 116 Maronites residing in the north, including through the weekly delivery of humanitarian assistance and support to the Greek Cypriot schools in the Karpas Peninsula. Some appointments of teachers and the use of some textbooks for Greek Cypriot schools were denied by the Turkish Cypriot authorities. Although requests for Greek-speaking doctors to attend to the health needs of elderly Greek Cypriots and Maronites in the north are yet to be addressed, some Greek-language medical services have been provided during the reporting period.

UNFICYP also facilitated the post-mortem transfer of six Greek Cypriots for burial in the north. For Turkish Cypriots residing in the south, UNFICYP remained in contact with local authorities to ensure access to health, welfare and educational support. There were again no developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish-language school in Limassol. UNFICYP also assisted in addressing the legal and humanitarian issues surrounding the imprisonment and temporary detention of Turkish Cypriots in the south through regular visits to the detention facilities where they were held. To enhance confidence in judicial proceedings, UNFICYP attended seven court hearings involving Turkish Cypriots in the south.

14. UNFICYP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued to engage with a wide range of stakeholders to promote enhanced cooperation in old town Nicosia, where the buffer zone is at its most narrow. UNFICYP facilitated six meetings between the Nicosia municipalities to develop joint projects on environmental, social and health issues of common concern. Cooperation continues with the Greek Cypriots to identify buildings along the Green Line that pose a threat to UNFICYP patrols and are in need of stabilization.

15. UNDP worked closely with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage on the protection of cultural sites on both sides of the island, with significant progress made in the restoration of Othello Tower in Famagusta and the Apostolos Andreas monastery. The renovation of 16 other cultural heritage sites on both sides of the island is either near completion, under design or about to begin.

16. In cooperation with international and local partners, UNFICYP supported 77 civil society events in which approximately 2,870 individuals from both communities engaged in sporting, cultural, educational or other activities. Of note, on 19 September 2014, six Turkish Cypriot racing vehicles participated in the international Cyprus Car Rally which, for the first time, engaged both sides and included a crossing of the buffer zone, outside the walls of old town Nicosia. The event was broadcast on the Eurosport television network and was enthusiastically received throughout the island. For the first time, and after the Cyprus Turkish Football Association lifted restrictions in February against affiliated clubs from recruiting Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriot Football Club, Değirmenlik, recruited Greek Cypriot football players and technical staff. UNFICYP also supported regular meetings of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party representatives under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia, which maintained open channels of communication. Separately, and in support of a political settlement, UNDP continued to promote a dialogue forum involving 45 organizations representing civil society, political parties, trade unions and business organizations and associations.

17. Dialogue in support of the peace process among the leaders of the religious communities continued to provide a model for constructive cooperation. On 25 and 26 September 2014, the Grand Mufti of Cyprus and the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, at the latter's invitation, made a joint visit to Paphos and nearby villages. Thanks to the personal intervention of the Grand Mufti, Greek Cypriots were able to worship on 2 November at the church of Saint George in Vadili for the first time since 1974. Seventeen Christian places of worship in the north were cleaned with the support of the Archbishop and, for the first time, of the Association of Mosques and of the Synodal Committee on Monuments of the Church of Cyprus. On 4 and 5 December, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief undertook his second follow-up visit to Cyprus since 2012.

18. Building on this positive trend, as previously reported, the Turkish Cypriot authorities approved 52 of 87 requests by Greek Cypriots and Maronites for services in the north between 1 January and 15 December 2014, compared to 31 approvals of 40 requests in 2013. Some requests to worship were denied, including the last-minute cancellation of a service at the church of Panayia Pergaminiotissa in Akanthou. Nonetheless, the absolute number of pilgrims being able to worship has risen sharply, including in 11 locations that had been inaccessible in the north since 1974. For its part, UNFICYP facilitated 65 religious services and commemorative events in 2014, involving more than 23,000 individuals, which were held in the buffer zone or required crossing of the buffer zone to the north. UNFICYP also facilitated the crossing of almost 1,000 pilgrims to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca in July for Eid al-Fitr and the same number to mark the month of Muharram, during November. A similar pilgrimage planned for 5 and 6 October did not take place owing to the lack of an agreement on the crossing point to be used for the purpose.

19. In support of the political process, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce continued to promote economic cooperation and confidence-building between the two communities. On 14 September in Istanbul, at the second meeting of the Nicosia Economic Forum, together with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey and the Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Greece, the Chambers issued a joint statement reiterating their determination to support the ongoing political process. The forum proposed a number of projects to transform the buffer zone into a zone of unity, including initiatives to support young entrepreneurs.

20. From June to November 2014, approximately 800,000 official crossings of the buffer zone were recorded. No agreement was reached on the opening of further crossing points. UNFICYP police continued to provide escorts for convoys with civilians and humanitarian supplies in accordance with the agreement reached by the leaders in October 2010 on the opening of the Limnitis/Yeşilırmak crossing point. Tension increased as the sides disagreed on the interpretation of that agreement, and the exact number of crossings permitted per week. Four requests were denied during the reporting period by the Greek Cypriot side. Following one such denial, on 27 November, the Turkish Cypriot authorities closed the crossing point for six hours, citing a computer malfunction. To ensure the smooth operation of the crossing, UNFICYP intervened and reminded both sides of their obligations stemming from the agreement.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons

21. During the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons continued with the exhumation, identification and return of the remains of missing persons. On 24 July, the two leaders visited the Committee's laboratory, lending support to its work. As at 18 December 2014, the Committee's bicommunal teams of archaeologists had exhumed the remains of 948 missing persons on both sides of the island. To date, the remains of 564 individuals have been returned to their respective families, including 135 during the reporting period. The total number of missing persons identified in 2014 now stands at 157, the highest in any given year. Following a decision of the Committee, the figures in this paragraph only include cases of persons on the official list of missing persons. Further to a request made on

9 May 2014 to the Turkish forces to allow the excavation of a fenced military area in the north, authorization was received in late September. However, as the area had been declared a mine field by Turkish Cypriot authorities, a survey was conducted by the Mine Action Service in October 2014, during which no mines were found. Excavations are ongoing.

V. Financial and administrative aspects

22. As indicated in my previous report, the General Assembly, by its resolution 68/286, appropriated the amount of $58 million for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent of $19.95 million, from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece. I invite other countries and organizations to make voluntary contributions, with a view to reducing the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

23. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, which amounts to some $55.4 million gross ($53.2 million net), has been submitted to the Controller.

24. As at 17 December 2014, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 17 December 2014 amounted to $12.5 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $1,731.5 million.

25. As at 17 December 2014, amounts owed to contributors for troop and contingent-owned equipment costs totalled $2 million and $353,000, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly schedule.

VI. Observations

26. On 6 October 2014, the Greek Cypriot side announced its decision to suspend its participation in the talks, following the announcement by Turkey of the conduct of a seismic survey in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. Following the suspension of the talks, I have underscored the need for a prompt resumption of the negotiations and appeal to the two sides to find a way to accomplish this without delay. I have noted that both communities can ill afford to perpetuate the status quo, in particular in the light of the wider regional context. I reiterate my call to both sides to refrain from the "blame game" and from negative rhetoric about each other. I call upon all interested parties to help create an environment conducive to resuming structured negotiations in a results-oriented manner, as agreed to by their leaders in their joint declaration of 11 February 2014.

27. I have repeatedly stressed that it is important to ensure that any new-found wealth, and in particular any natural resources found around Cyprus, benefits both communities. I remain of the view that the existence of common natural resources constitutes a strong incentive for all parties to find a durable solution to the Cyprus problem and should engender deeper cooperation for the benefit of all stakeholders in the region.

28. As UNFICYP concluded the fiftieth year of its continued presence in Cyprus, the situation along the ceasefire lines remained calm and stable. At the same time, minor incidents and challenges, which passed largely unnoticed by the wider public, remained a regular occurrence. Frequent unauthorized civilian activity in the buffer zone, resulting in part from a perception of greater security, further complicated the overall security situation in the buffer zone. In that context, the Force's regular patrolling and liaison with the opposing forces and the respective authorities continued to play an important role in preventing an escalation of tensions.

29. I call upon the opposing forces to respond positively to the Force Commander's efforts to strengthen relations and to engage actively with UNFICYP on military confidence-building measures as a sign of their commitment to a common future. In this regard, I welcome the decision of the Turkish forces to reduce by 30 soldiers their presence within the Green Line. At the same time, I call for the removal of personnel from other locations where closed-circuit television cameras remain. Such a move could trigger a wider reduction on both sides, encouraging a normalization in old town Nicosia. Another necessary step should include formal acceptance by both sides of the aide-memoire of 1989, bringing an end to the contestation of the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire lines. I urge a speedy resolution in Strovilia to enable UNFICYP to carry out its duties in the area.

30. I acknowledge with appreciation the cooperation of the Turkish forces with the Committee on Missing Persons in relation to a suspected mined area in the north. Another step could be for both sides to facilitate, without delay, access to all remaining mined areas in and outside the buffer zone, in line with Security Council resolution 2135 (2014). It should be recalled that States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction are obliged to report the location of all mined areas that contain, or are suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines under its jurisdiction or control. In this light, I call upon both sides to share any information on the location of minefields across the island, including the 28 laid in the past by the National Guard in the north. Demining is a humanitarian issue and should be addressed immediately on its own merits. The United Nations stands ready to assist the parties further in their aspiration to achieve a mine-free Cyprus.

31. It is also incumbent on both sides to ensure that tensions remain low. The operation of the crossing point at Limnitis/Yeşilırmak and ongoing criminal activity in Pyla are two sources of such tension that require attention. Regrettably, restrictions continue on the freedom of movement of locally employed United Nations personnel to the north. Freedom of movement for all United Nations personnel is a matter of principle for the Organization and an operational requirement for UNFICYP. I call upon the Turkish Cypriot authorities to respect that principle.

32. UNFICYP continued to promote civilian use of the buffer zone, provided that it did not affect security and stability. Such activities, undertaken in accordance with UNFICYP procedures, promote trust between the communities, particularly projects that are jointly agreed. In this light, I call upon all stakeholders to take meaningful steps to ensure that the university in Pyla evolves into a bicommunal education facility, especially given its location in the only bicommunal village in the buffer zone. I once again call upon the respective authorities to act decisively towards all who engage in unauthorized activities, thus showing respect for the Force's authority in the buffer zone and supporting it in the implementation of its mandate.

33. The security and environmental challenges in old town Nicosia, and in particular in the militarized area within the Venetian walls, where the buffer zone is at its most narrow, need to be addressed. I reiterate my call, and that of the Under-Secretary General during his visit to Cyprus in June, that both sides, including their respective civilian and military leaderships, the mayors and municipalities of Nicosia and the people in charge of the Nicosia Master Plan, in cooperation with UNFICYP and UNDP, adopt a holistic approach to the urban infrastructure of the old town through joint projects that could attract investment and thereby transform the wider area. Such an approach could contribute to a return to normal conditions by enhancing security along the Green Line and promoting public confidence between the communities.

34. The progress made on access to religious sites is commendable, with some 23,000 persons able to visit multiple and diverse sites in the north and 2,000 the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in the south, in 2014. I strongly encourage both sides to enable further access to many of the over 500 churches and other places of worship in the north and the 100 mosques in the south.

35. Civil society has a critical role to play in contributing to peace in Cyprus. I commend the religious leaders for their continuing dialogue, which has delivered tangible results for Cypriots, including the opening of some locations of worship for the first time in decades. I also commend business leaders for their vision, and I encourage enhanced support by all concerned for their efforts to promote private sector initiatives that could have a positive effect on the continued regrettably low level of trade and persons crossing the buffer zone. I encourage once again the respective football associations to put into practice their earlier agreement on greater cooperation.

36. An active civil society and the continued development of economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts can provide critical support to political leaders and help them to make the necessary compromises at the negotiating table. Similarly, the removal of restrictions and barriers that impede the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community will promote trust. Such a development will help to address the isolation concerns of the Turkish Cypriots, as well as their inability to participate meaningfully in an interconnected world, thereby preparing Cyprus for a comprehensive settlement. In my view, encouraging trade can only have a positive effect on the objective of reunification. I once again call upon both community leaders to exert efforts to create a climate conducive to achieving greater economic and social parity between the two sides, including through joint projects and increased trade, which will make an eventual reunification easier and more likely. In the context of an internationally sanctioned peace process, efforts in the opposite direction can only be counterproductive.

37. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the critical humanitarian work being done on behalf of the families of victims through the Committee on Missing Persons. While I welcome the results achieved by the Committee during the reporting period, I also note that, 50 years after their disappearance, half of all missing persons have yet to be located and more than 70 per cent have yet to be identified. It is critical that the work of the Committee suffer no further delays. The aforementioned statistics and the advancing age of relatives of missing persons highlight the need to expedite the process, including through an accelerated granting

of access to military areas by the Turkish forces. In this regard, I once again reiterate the need for increased cooperation with the Committee.

38. UNFICYP continues to play an important role on the island by exercising authority in the buffer zone and contributing to keeping the peace and resolving various issues that affect the daily lives of individuals in both communities. However, its ability to play this role depends by and large on the commitment of the two sides to refrain from challenging its authority and legitimacy in the buffer zone. In calling upon both sides to continue to cooperate with UNFICYP in good faith, I recommend that the mandate of the mission be extended for a period of six months, until 31 July 2015.

39. UNFICYP continues to maintain close collaboration with my mission of good offices and other United Nations actors on the island. In line with the relevant Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2168 (2014), the mission remains engaged in contingency planning in relation to the settlement. The planning will continue to be guided by developments in the negotiations and the views of the parties on the possible role of the United Nations in this respect.

40. At the same time, I will continually keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and report to the Security Council with recommendations, as appropriate, for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as warranted.

41. In view of the recent fiftieth anniversary of UNFICYP, I once again express my gratitude to the 34 countries that have now contributed since 1964 either troops or police or both to the mission, and I pay tribute to the 185 peacekeepers who lost their lives over that period in support of peace in Cyprus. It is incumbent upon all parties to work in a determined manner towards a comprehensive settlement, to which all Cypriots aspire and which would obviate the continuing need for a peacekeeping presence.

42. I would like to express my appreciation to my Special Representative and Head of UNFICYP, Ms. Buttenheim, including for her commitment and dedication during the five months she served as Acting Special Adviser. Following the appointment of Mr. Eide as Special Adviser, Ms. Buttenheim continues to act as my Deputy Special Adviser. I should also like to express my gratitude to Major General Chao Liu of China who served the United Nations as the UNFICYP Force Commander from February 2011 to August 2014. I would also like to acknowledge the appointment of Major General Kristin Lund of Norway, who joined UNFICYP in August as the first woman to command a United Nations peacekeeping force. Increasing the numbers of female personnel in peacekeeping is a priority for the United Nations, and I am pleased to see UNFICYP leading the way across the military, police and civilian components. Finally, I extend my thanks to all the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

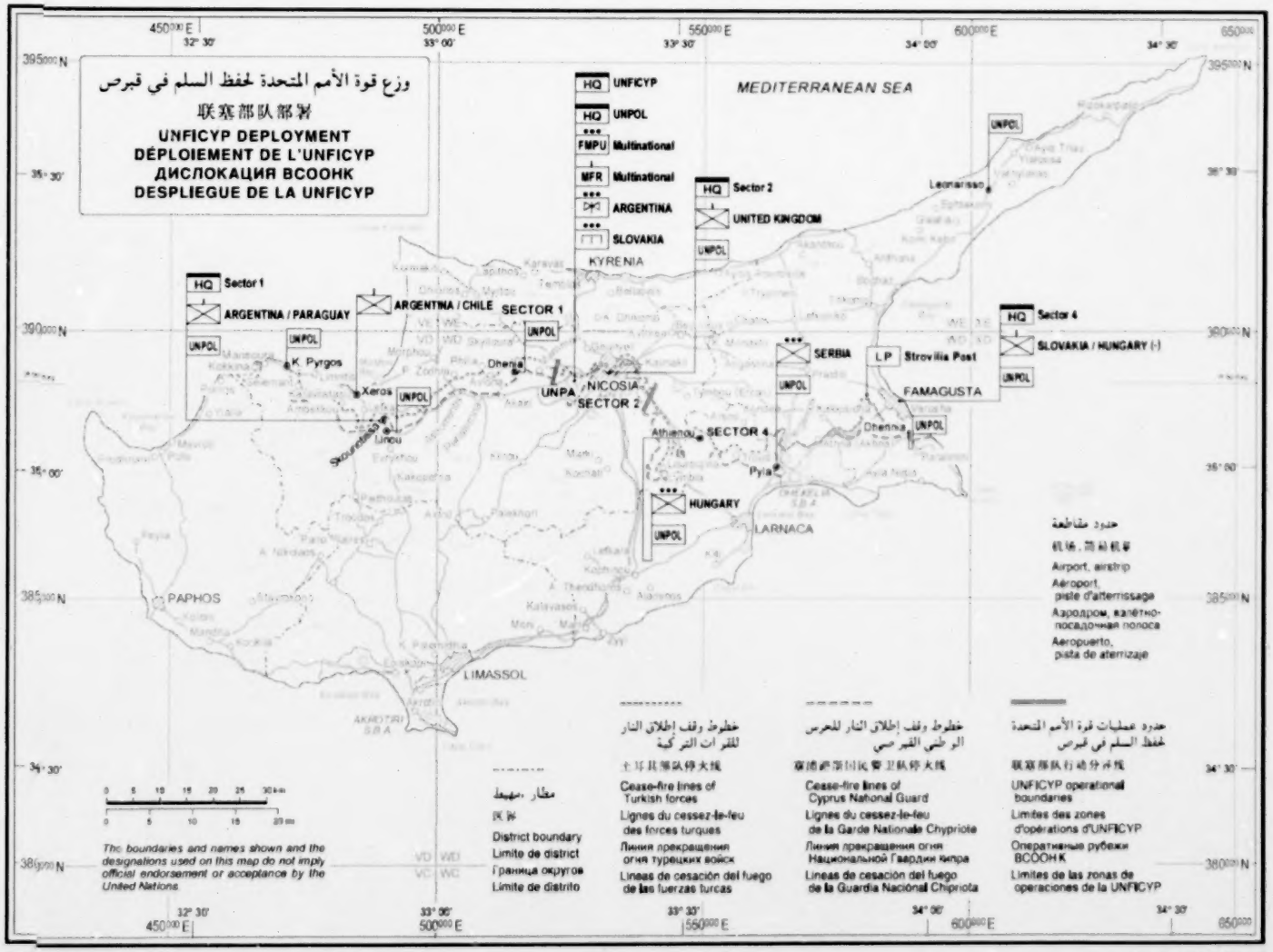
Annex

Countries providing military and police personnel to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (as at 30 November 2014)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina[a]	295
Austria	4
Canada	1
Norway	2
Hungary[b]	84
Slovakia[c]	199
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	275
Total	**860**

Country	*United Nations police*
Australia	15
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8
India	8
Ireland	12
Italy	4
Lithuania	2
Montenegro	4
Romania	2
Serbia	2
Slovakia	2
Ukraine	7
Total	**66**

[a] The Argentine contingent includes soldiers from Chile (14), Paraguay (12) and Brazil (1).
[b] The Hungarian contingent includes soldiers from Serbia (7).
[c] The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Serbia (39) and Ukraine (2).



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